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IF VERDUN SHALL FALL

The French military authorities are not making the mistake again of placing final reliance on the ability of any great fortress to hold out against the Germans. They learned at Liege, at Namur, at Maubeuge, the impossibility of such reliance. They have made Verdun as strong as possible, and against the fearful attacks of the Germans will hold it with all determination. But it is not essential to them.

Rather, they will make the great fortress cost their enemies a staggering price in lives and munitions, and then, if necessary, will retire from it to resume trench warfare in magnificently prepared trenches. Taking Verdun will merely straighten out the lines in which that position has been an exposed salient. There is no panic in Paris about the terrific attacks on Verdun. The French people do not assume that to lose Verdun is to have their line crumpled up or Paris instantly rendered untenable. They know that they are taking a tremendous toll from the assailants; they believe that in the end the Kaiser will, even if he succeeds, have merely sold tens of thousands of his bravest soldiers' lives for a worthless prize. The French army will not be trapped in Verdun, or any other fortress.

WHAT DOES BERLIN MEAN?

In all these discussions over armed merchantmen by the Berlin foreign office and its representative in this country, Ambassador Bernstorff, there is a singularly persistent juggling of ideas and confounding of principles, undoubtedly premeditated and possibly significant.

Repeated assurances are given in various forms that under Berlin's new doctrine a submarine will not seek to sink merchantmen unless those merchantmen attack the submarine by firing at it or by ramming it or unless they attempt to escape.

But this was long ago agreed. We have never questioned the legal right of a submarine to fire at a merchantman seeking to escape capture, much less at a merchantman putting up a fight against the submarine. Nobody would undertake to question the legal right of the submarine to shell a merchantman until it should stop for visit and search or for surrender.

It is not apparent why those principles upheld by all nations should thus be dragged into this new controversy in the way they are, unless the Berlin foreign office, as it has done so often before, is deliberately setting up in this country a case which it can gradually and quietly compromise while making it appear at home that there are at issue two entirely separate cases, one of which Berlin does not and never did question and one of which it does not and never will abandon.

This putting out of final decisions for home consumption has been so habitual with the Berlin foreign office that there is every reason to suspect the same sort of performance now. And yet there is always the hideous chance that, if, after all, Berlin does not intend to commit an act which would force the United States Government to a break with the German government something might go wrong with the plan.

Berlin may intend to preserve the existing relations with us by not torpedoing any merchantman, armed or unarmed, without giving innocent neutrals a chance to quit the ship. Berlin, although declaring that armed merchantmen are ships of war, may intend to treat them as if they were not armed, to give them warning, to permit passengers and crews to take to the boats; but a von Tirpitz submarine commander may take his instructions from the admiralty rather than from the foreign office. That would be no new thing in this submarine warfare.

Of course, no matter what Berlin maintains submarines have the right to do with an armed merchantman, the United States Government has no cause for a break until they do it. If they never do it, no matter how much they talk about doing it, the United States Government will never have to act.

The trouble is there is more than an even chance that a submarine may do it, just as heretofore a submarine here, a submarine there, and a submarine some place else has always come along to do the very thing this Government said should not be done. And if in this case it should be done and American lives should be sacrificed President Wilson, after his warning to the Berlin foreign office and after his declaration to Congress, delivered in the shape of his official letter to Senator Stone, would be face to face with an unequalled rupture or an absolute

back-down. It would have to be one or the other. Nothing else would be possible.

VETO IT, MR. PRESIDENT!

The House of Representatives is passing the postoffice appropriation bill today.

A casual consideration of some provisions suggests as pertinent the inquiry whether this bill has been written by the department, the committee, and the House or by the lobby representing the rural carriers, the city clerks and collectors, the bonding companies, the express companies, and the various other interests that are concerned to benefit through this legislation.

Unless this bill is thoroughly overhauled in the Senate, it ought to be vetoed.

There was inserted a provision making fifty pounds the maximum weight of any parcel post shipment. This means to atrophy, to dwarf all possible proper development of the parcel post.

Congressman Lewis, who knows more about it than anybody else, says this provision is worth \$50,000,000 to the express companies.

In amending the provision governing the payments for hauling mail cars, the terminal rates have been so increased that it is declared they are about double those recommended by the Bourne joint Congressional commission after its very complete and conservative investigation.

The House was not even permitted to vote on the provision for the conduct of its own business of bonding employees, although that provision would have saved the Government millions of dollars annually.

There is inserted one single provision, not quite two lines long, that will cost the Government about \$10,000,000 a year ultimately. It reads:

No part of the money herein appropriated for rural delivery service shall be used to cover any expenses upon any motor vehicle route until a majority of the patrons to be served by such motor vehicle route shall, by written petition, ask the Postoffice Department to establish such motor vehicle route.

That provision simply means that the extension of motor vehicle service is practically killed. The average motor vehicle route covers about fifty miles; the average horse-and-buggy route, twenty-four miles. About 1,000 horse-and-buggy routes have already been converted into 500 motor vehicle routes, at an average saving of about \$500 for each of the horse-and-buggy routes.

But hereafter, if this provision shall remain in the bill, there will be no conversion of horse-and-buggy routes into motor-vehicle routes unless the majority of patrons shall petition for it.

This means that the rural carrier, in order to save his job, and to prevent the betterment of service, has merely to get his patrons to refuse signatures to the petition just as a personal favor to him.

Experience has proved conclusively that it is practically impossible in most cases to get such a petition against the appeal of the rural carriers.

This innocent looking little provision represents the rural carrier lobby.

The whole bill reads as if it had been prepared for the express purpose of representing every possible interest except good service and economical administration.

President Wilson ought to let it be known that he will veto it unless it is radically reformed in the right direction.

BRANDEIS DISCREDITED

At the very hearings which the Democratic majority of the Senate Judiciary Committee have tried to twist in his favor, Brandeis, as regards his fitness to sit in the Supreme Court of the United States, has become, on the testimony given there, a thoroughly discredited man. Perhaps no man whose nomination for the highest tribunal in the land has been thrown out by the Senate has ever more thoroughly discredited. Those who are most insistent in their demand that he should go into the Supreme Court because of his great ability can hardly feel now that his qualifications in other respects are satisfactory.

It may be that there have been men in the Supreme Court in whose records there were things as unattractive as have been shown to be in the record of Brandeis. Nobody could say as to that for sure. But it is inconceivable, if there have been men like that on the Supreme Bench, that such things could have been made public about them in the official records of the upper and confirming branch of Congress and that then a Chief Executive would let the nomination stand and the Senate confirm it.

The constant word is that the Democratic machine in control of the Senate is going to confirm Brandeis anyhow. Those who are in a position to know declare that it is the purpose of those in control of the Senate to put the Supreme Court into politics and to begin the work of making this tribunal a political machine with the confirmation of Brandeis.

But it is almost unthinkable that a President like Grover Cleve-

land could have had some of his nominations to the Supreme Court—notably William B. Hornblower and Wheeler H. Peckham—thrown out by a Democratic Senate, the only Democratic Senate there has been in all the years since then should force Brandeis into the Supreme Court, whatever his disqualifications, however shocking a thing it must be to public sentiment and however costly to the reputation of the Democratic party.

ELEMENTAL WAR ONCE MORE

The huge artillery pieces that the Germans introduced and that their enemies are now matching as fast as possible, made fortresses, even when built of concrete and armor plate, all but worthless; traps, rather than places of safety. Then the armies went out into the open field, dug themselves into the ground, and fought the trench warfare with which the world first became slightly familiar during the Russo-Japanese war.

Now, following the development of the Verdun campaign, it is declared that the trenches are just as useless as the great fortifications were, whenever a great artillery fire is concentrated against them. The only thing that can stand at all against this kind of attack is infantry. It must be moving; it must have well-nigh exhausted reserves to take the places of those who fall; it must be so perfectly trained and so reckless of death that it shall act like water, flowing forever in to fill the places that are dipped out. In short, human valor, human capacity for sacrifice, human thoughtlessness of life, must at last be the one force to stand against the most destructive of attacks.

This means hand-to-hand fighting; and in this men of the twentieth century are not greatly different from men of forty centuries earlier; it is hand against hand, foot against foot, eye against eye. The artillery can be of small avail when great forces come to close quarters as they did in the assaults upon Fort Douaumont, because neither side dares make the most effective use of its guns, lest its own troops be the sufferers.

We are wont to think of present-day war as largely a war of machinery. The truth is that there never was a period when battle demanded so much from the individual man, when his chance of escape was less, when the strain on his nerves and physique was comparable. The storied conflicts of olden time were as summer-day tournaments compared to the supreme horrors of the battlefield of today; and human valor is once more the determining factor.

WILSON, THE NOMINEE

Ex-Representative Bartholdt of St. Louis, as persistently a hyphenated disturber of the neutrality and peace and welfare of the nation as if he were still in Congress, said at a meeting of German editors and publishers in Chicago: "It is not even certain that Wilson will be the nominee of the Democratic party."

Well, it isn't certain if there is any doubt that water runs down hill, that the sun is going to rise tomorrow morning, and that all men, being mortal, must sooner or later die. Otherwise, the surest thing in this country in general and in the Democratic party in particular is that if Woodrow Wilson lives until the St. Louis convention selects its candidate he will be the nominee of the Democratic party.

Speaking of that mail theft, it appears that all burglars are unintelligent. They always "just miss" about ten times as much as they get.

Friends of Hughes base their hopes on the fact that they know exactly where he stands. From well-informed quarters comes the report that after the smoke has cleared away the public will still know exactly where he sits.

Mr. Schiff might be informed that the average cit. would not be ashamed to loan \$100,000,000 to the Russian government.

There are those who still believe that the Arlington Hotel project has mere paper weight.

If the Housekeepers' Alliance can limit the talks of its members to three minutes, the Senate ought to be able to put over some sort of cloture legislation.

Henry Siegel, New York financier, probably is beginning to believe that life is just one damp cell after another.

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Physician to Lecture.

Columbia Council, No. 48, National Union is arranging a lecture to be given by a Washington physician at the Pythian Temple on the evening of March 11. It will be the first of a series of monthly lectures to be given by the lodge.

George Arliss, Success in Paganini, Poli Players Present "Kick-In"

English Actor Stars in Role of Famous Musician Before First-Nighters at National.

LOVE STORY ENDS HAPPILY

Miss Margery Maude, in Role of Charlotte, Earns Distinction in Play.

GEORGE ARLISS appeared at the National Theater last night in a comedy which has never before been seen in Washington. "Paganini," written by Edward Knoblauch.

Mr. Arliss, who impersonates the famous musician, a figure full of romance and interest aside from the fact of his being the greatest executant on the violin, at one of the few actors today who could even attempt such a part.

The exigencies of the delineation demand an unflinching adherence to the role, depth of research and study into the realm of music alone, and a keen appreciation of the situation which demands that he fall in live with, and renounce, a young English girl.

While it is difficult for most stage people to adequately portray a one or two sided character, Mr. Arliss gives no hint of effort in his picture of the mercurial Paganini, fired one moment by some human emotion and captured in another by his art.

The plot is thin, but since it affords a full display of the ability of Mr. Arliss, one cannot complain. He portrays a romantic incident in the life of the great violinist, when he falls under the charm of a young English girl, only to find, after he has gone away with her, that his sole passion in life after all is his violin.

In recognition of the fact that he cannot give her the affection for which she craves in the proper measure, he hands her back to her father and she to her respectable English fiancé.

The story opens in the home of an Englishman, where the Maestro has been a guest. His visit is at a close. He must say good-by to Charlotte, the daughter of his host, and follow the artist to Dover, going with him thence to Calais.

It is there, in the last act, that she is brought to realize, along with Paganini, the true meaning of life. She is first in his heart, to the subjugation of all else.

She goes willingly into the arms of her English lover, and everything ends happily.

The scenes are delicately and exquisitely planned, and minor parts are ably filled in by the well-known comedienne, Miss Margery Maude, daughter of Cyril Maude, the eminent English actor. Does credit to her distinguished parent.

KEITH'S.

Irene Franklin, in her repertoire of character songs, and Will Carey and Miss Maude, in their well-known sketch, "One Night Only," are sharing the headline positions on the bill at Keith's this week.

Miss Franklin, with her husband, Burt Green, at the piano, is offering her familiar songs, "Dirty Face," "Red Head," and several new numbers of the characterful Irene Franklin brand, pleasing in her "innocent kid" impersonations.

The Crosby sketch is this year brought up-to-the-minute in its connection with the peace ship and the "Tin Lizzie." Mr. Dayne giving his usual unique style, and the village master and Jack of all trades.

Captain Gruher and Miss Adeline introduce an elephant, a horse, a donkey, and a dog in an excellent exhibition of animal training. Harry Tighe, of "college days" fame, assisted by the diminutive Eddie, leads a troupe in comedy away above the average. Lucie and Fritz Krueger, violin and cello virtuosos, attracted applause for their various numbers.

William Perry, as "The Frog," has an original contention act with artistic setting. The comedy troupe in comedy stunts, and Monroe and Mack in sidewalk conversation, complete the week's bill.

STRAND.

"The Wood Nymph" is the Triangle play which introduces Marie Doro at the Strand as the chief feature of the week's program.

Marie Doro has a charming personality that is brought out especially well in photography. As the wood nymph she is thoroughly in keeping with the sylvan setting that has been given her.

Frank Campbell, as "The Frog," and Will West are in the supporting cast.

With the second feature, "The Perils of the Park," in which Harry Gribben gives a very amusing Keystone comedy, the "Wood Nymph" will be shown again today.

Tomorrow and Thursday Harold Lockwood and May Allison appear in "Life's Blind Alley," a Western drama, and Anna Little will be presented in "Double Crossed," both being Mutual dramas.

The Triangle company will introduce Orrin Johnson and Edith Markey in "The Price of Power," Friday and Saturday, a play that is said to tell something of the real price in happiness and contentment that is paid for power.

The second feature will be Wilfred Greenwood in "The Happy Masquerader."

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